



Interurban Transit Partnership

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House Transportation Committee
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On behalf of *The Rapid*, I am here to voice our strong support for House Bill 6021, the bill that would allow Act 196 transit authorities to seek a 25 year millage in support of a fixed-guideway system authorized under 49 USC 5309.

As I am sure you know from previous testimony on this issue, *The Rapid* has such a project in process. There has been significant progress since we last testified. The transportation demand model is complete and has been calibrated to insure accuracy in its user benefit forecasting. While the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will not give any official approval at this stage, we have been in contact with them and their comments give us clear indication that our model and our process are sound. We have every expectation that our project will be extremely competitive as we seek to enter the next phase of project development, preliminary engineering, and that we will be able to start drawing down on the \$14.4 million authorized for us.

This is contingent, however, on the passage of HB 6021. The last hurdle we need to overcome is the ability to demonstrate that we have the means to secure long-term local operating funding. While an actual millage vote is still years away, this change to Act 196 will allow the citizens of the greater Grand Rapids area the ability to determine the level of public transportation service available to the community.

We will be holding a series of public meetings next month to help the local advisory committee recommend one corridor and one mode in order to arrive at a locally preferred alternative, or LPA. Once the LPA has been accepted by *The Rapid's* Board of Directors and the MPO, it will be submitted to the FTA. It is at that point that we expect the go ahead to advance to preliminary engineering.